

**REMARKS**

The present Amendment is in response to the Final Office Action mailed October 6, 2004, in the above-identified application. Enclosed herewith is a Petition requesting a three month Extension of Time for resetting the deadline for responding to the Office Action from January 6, 2005, to and including April 6, 2005. Also enclosed is a Request for Continued Examination.

In the present Amendment, Applicants have canceled claims 1-7 and added new claims 8-21. Support for new claims 8-21 is found in the originally filed specification. The Abstract of the Disclosure has been amended to reflect the limitations found in new claim 8.

Applicants respectfully assert that new claims 8-21 are patentable over the prior art of record.

Applicants also enclose herewith an Information Disclosure Statement to submit the prior art listed thereon.

Applicants respectfully request consideration and allowance of the pending claims. If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that he telephone Applicants' Attorney at 908-654-5000 in order to overcome any additional objections which he might have.

Application No.: 10/715,969

Docket No.: SPINE 3.0-446 CONT

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested Amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

Dated: April 5, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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